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ABSTRACT

A rural Vermont school district instituted needed and desired changes during a 3-year improvement effort. A 1982 needs assessment evaluated school performance in seven areas found to exist in effective schools. Change efforts followed three principles: all curriculum and policy changes were done on a district-wide and K-12 basis, teachers were not forced to participate but volunteered or "bought in" to the changes as they unfolded, and deadlines for achieving changes were established developmentally. Impacts of the needs assessment and subsequent changes occurred in curriculum content and emphasis, teaching methods and activities, organizational structure, instructional materials, educational goals, school policies and space allocation. Factors playing a major role in implementing changes were needed, clarity of proposed change action, level of complexity, quality and practicality of the program, school district history of innovative attempts, process of adopting changes, district administrative support, staff development and participation, time line, evaluation systems, board and community characteristics, role of principal, staff relationships, teacher characteristics, and external assistance. The followup study documents specific improvement activities, their impact on instruction, curriculum, and policy, and factors which influenced the change process. An implementation questionnaire and protocols for site visits and structured interviews are appended. (LFL)

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A Case Study of the Implementation Process

or

How a Rural Elementary School Makes a Difference

May 1985

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1.0 Background on Study

In the fall of 1982, the Center for Evaluation and Policy Research (CEPR) of the College of Education and Social Services (CESS) at the University of Vermont (UVM), conducted an effective schools needs assessment study at the request of Bruce Richardson, Superintendent of Schools for the Orleans Southwest School District (OSW). The needs assessment study involved the five elementary schools of the Orleans Southwest including Craftsbury, Greensboro, Hardwick, Wolcott, and Woodbury. The needs assessment study was patterned after a model developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education which was based on the effective schools research and school improvement literature.

Essentially each of the above mentioned schools were involved in a detailed examination and evaluation of their school's performance vis-a-vis seven characteristics. These characteristics have been found to exist in schools which are described as "effective." That is to say, schools which meet the following dimensions of quality: safe and orderly environment, clear school mission, instructional leadership, high expectations for student performance, opportunity to learn and time on task, monitoring of student progress, and positive school-community relations. Also, these schools satisfy an equity standard which is to say students, regardless of social economic status, have an equal opportunity to learn and who perform comparably on standardized measures of achievement.

The needs assessment study was seen by the superintendent and a task force of teachers and principals as an opportunity to determine how well each of the Orleans Southwest elementary schools were performing on these standards and to use the results of the study to plan subsequent district and local school improvements. A detailed report was provided to each of the faculties of the participating schools and was based on questionnaire and interview results, achievement test data analyses, school observations, and document reviews. The reports were designed to be descriptive in nature and to facilitate district planning efforts. The content of the reports were carefully crafted to permit a thorough examination of strengths and weaknesses and to permit the establishment of priorities for school improvement.

Since the fall of 1982, the Orleans Southwest School District has been involved in a school improvement effort which has included district wide and local school changes. These efforts have attempted to address some of the concerns raised by the needs assessment study but not be limited to these results only. Areas of concern have included curricula development needs for grades kindergarten through twelve in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science; and policy areas of retention, reporting pupil progress, teacher evaluation, inservice education of staff, and reimbursement for graduate

course participation. In addition to the district wide concerns, each local elementary school identified problems needing attention such as: space, student behavior, staff morale, and so forth. Regardless of whether the concern was district wide or local, priorities were established and short and long term strategies were developed to meet the higher priorities.

In the spring of 1985, this author conducted a follow-up study in the Orleans Southwest District as part of a sabbatical leave project. A research study which in part was designed to determine what activities in the OSW schools were pursued since the fall of 1982, what impact did these changes have in the district and the respective local schools, and what factors seem to influence or facilitate the change process. The OSW District agreed to participate in this study since its findings were seen as providing documentation and an evaluation of progress to date and providing an information base for subsequent district planning efforts.

Remaining sections of this report include a brief description of the methodology employed in this study, background on the Hardwick community and school, the major findings of the study and a summary of the study. A subsequent report will deal with the implications of the study for school change in rural school districts.

2.0 Methodology of Study

In this study was employed a case study design that included the use of quantitative methods such as questionnaire and test data analyses and qualitative methods of structured and semi-structured interviews, nonparticipant observations, and document reviews. This case study has been part of a long term interest in developing an understanding of how school systems and their local schools attempt to improve educational opportunities for students. This research emerged from previous work done in the Center for Evaluation and Policy Research with schools in the State of Vermont. The focus of this ongoing research has been to explore factors and conditions which enable schools to examine their performance and embark on a school improvement process.

As stated previously, the Orleans Southwest School District was part of an effective schools needs assessment study that was directed by this author and other members of CEPR. This follow-up study was initiated approximately two and half years from the original needs assessment study. After receiving initial approval and authorization by the superintendent of schools in the fall of 1984, the following sequence of events were pursued:

1. Design of the Implementation Questionnaire and School Background Information Form.

2. Orientation to purposes of follow-up study and distribution of questionnaire to the staff members of the five elementary schools.

3. Data analyses of questionnaire results and the rank ordering of the schools based on self reported impact of the needs assessment study and related improvement efforts.

4. Five day onsite visitation to Hardwick Elementary School which included the use of the qualitative methods mentioned previously.

5. Synthesis and summarization of qualitative and quantitative results in the present report.

The principle instrument for determining staff perceptions of the implementation of various changes since the fall of 1982 and factors influencing those changes was the Implementation Questionnaire (See Attachment A). This instrument was adapted from a similar questionnaire used by Rosenblum and Louis (1981) for the rural experimental schools study sponsored by National Institute of Education and conducted by the Rand Corporation. The Implementation Questionnaire was designed to determine the degree to which the needs assessment process(1) of the Orleans Southwest District had impact upon various areas such as: curriculum, teaching activities and methods, educational goals of the system, school level problems, and school climate. In addition, the respondents were queried in regard to their perception of what factors and persons influenced the implementation process. Of the 746 variables explored by this instrument, 132 variables (items 4, 5, 7 - 9, 12, 13, 16, 18, 20, and 21) were aggregated to permit an "implementation score"(2) to be determined for each school. The respective scores for each school and rank position were as follows:

Rank	School	Score
(1)	Hardwick Elementary School	283
(2)	Greensboro Elementary School	382

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1 For the purposes of this study, the needs assessment process was defined as not only the formal gathering of information by a school district and outside persons (i.e., effective schools assessment) but also included subsequent efforts at planning and implementing a variety of changes over a period of time.

2 This score was derived by conducting an analysis of variance statistical procedure for each of the 132 variables and rank ordering the respective responses of the five participating schools.

(3) Wolcott Elementary School 427.5
(4) Craftsbury Elementary School 428.5
(5) Woodbury Elementary School 491

As can be observed, the Hardwick Elementary score reflects a higher ranking on the variables identified and appeared, by the questionnaire, results to have been impacted to the greatest extent by the OSW needs assessment process. There are some cautions which should be kept in mind in interpreting these scores. For example, the differences of average responses per variable item for each school was often very slight (e.g., 2.5 vs. 2.6) and not statistically significant. On the other hand, the ranking procedure did permit differentiating among the schools and in determining which school was most influenced albeit the differences were minimal in some cases. Also, the process of determining the degree to which a school has been impacted by a needs assessment process is somewhat relative to the degree to which the school is in need of making changes or has potential for further growth. That is to say, if a school is in need of a greater number of changes, it has greater potential for being impacted than a school that is primarily in need of maintaining its already established strengths. In any regard, Hardwick was found by this procedure to have been most influenced by the needs assessment process and selected for further study.

A Site Visitation Protocol (See Attachment B) was designed to permit exploring in more depth the following questions:

1. What were the key activities that the school engaged in since the gathering and reporting of the needs assessment data to the total school staff?

2. What specific evidence or examples can be provided that demonstrates the impact of the needs assessment study and related subsequent activities?

3. What factors influenced the needs assessment planning and implementation process and contributed to the impact reported by the staff in response to question 2?

The Site Visitation Protocol included semistructured and structured interviews, nonparticipant observations, and a review of pertinent documents. The site visitation was conducted on Friday, March 8th and Monday through Thursday, March 11 - 14, 1985. Fourteen structured interviews were conducted with teachers, administrators, and the president of the school board. A purposeful sampling procedure was followed to ensure that a cross section of personnel, who were knowledgeable about the school's efforts and subsequent results, were interviewed. The nonparticipant observations were conducted in classrooms, the lunchroom, the playground, two general faculty meetings, a

district administrative staff meeting, and a school board meeting. In addition to formal interviews, there were several informal, spontaneous dialogues with various members of the staff and community. Documents that received special attention included the Hartwick School approval application to the Vermont State Department of Education, an A+ nomination application to Instructor Magazine, the "Redbook" in which school district and Hardwick School policies, procedures, and other important documents are assembled, and a special memorandum from the superintendent of schools to district personnel explaining the relationship of district school improvement efforts and the effective schools research findings. Also reviewed were curricula guides and instructional units.

The above mentioned sources provided the data and information base for the observations and conclusions which follow.

3.0 Background on Hardwick Community and School

The Town of Hardwick is geographically on the southwestern border of the Northeast Kingdom, a section of Vermont that is very rural in nature and made up of many sparsely located small towns and villages. The area is located in the northeastern corner of Vermont and is often characterized as having limited economic and employment opportunities. Hardwick was chartered in 1781 and grew rapidly in population from 1790 to 1860. The principal industry was granite which peaked in 1911 and continued until 1934. Since then agriculture, small businesses, and more recently; residential and recreational developments have emerged. Since 1920, the population of Hardwick has remained relatively stable and is currently 2600 inhabitants.

The Hardwick Elementary School was built in 1961 and is located on the main street of the Town of Hardwick. It is a steel frame masonry two-story building with a large gymnasium and stage in the center bordered by corridors and classrooms on two sides of the four-sided building. Current school enrollment is 353 students which is below its maximum enrollment of 440 students in 1973. The school offers classes for grades kindergarten through six. The first grades are located in East Hardwick and a second grade is located in a transportable building on the backside of the school's playground. Another transportable building in the same location is used for instrumental and vocal music classes.

A visitor to the building is struck by its cleanliness, hanging plants, large glass windows, student pictures, wall paintings, and samples of victorious contests in mathematics, spelling, art, and writing. The physical environment is enhanced by a staff of 44 persons which includes a full time principal, a secretary, 19 classroom teachers, five specialists, eight aides, three custodians, five kitchen staff members, and two shared

district personnel. Current per pupil cost (1984-85) is $2,365.65 with state aid running at approximately the 70% level.

The students served by the Hardwick Elementary School can be described in a variety of ways. Test data results (1982) showed that 35% of the students fell below the 30th percentile on the Metropolitan Achievement Test. The percentage of low social economic status (SES) pupils below the 30th percentile was 42% compared to 27% of other SES pupils. There are 55 pupils that are receiving Chapter I and learning specialist services and a special educator works with 44 students. Thirty-five students are receiving special language assistance. These numbers do not, however, tell the full story. Classroom, lunchroom, and playground observations and informal discussions with students revealed a pretty normal, enthusiastic, and hard working group of students. Friendliness and ease of conversation was evident throughout the school.

4.0 Major Findings of Study

The findings of this study are divided into three parts, using the three general research questions as a guide. As with any field study, it is difficult to reduce findings to a neat set of categories or results. What follows is a synthesis of findings from the multiple sources and methods described earlier in this report.

General Question #1

What were the key activities that the Hartwick Elementary School engaged in since the gathering and reporting of the needs assessment data to the total school staff?

A listing of the variety of school level and district level activities does not reveal the enthusiasm or sense of purpose that teachers revealed surrounding these activities. On the other hand, the list does represent a significant amount of work and commitment that has permitted a number of changes to be incorporated in the school and district. Also, as will be explored later in this report: there were two principles which guided the pursuit of various activities. First, all curriculum and policy changes would be done on a district wide and K - 12 basis. The second principle was that teachers would not be forced to participate but rather were permitted to volunteer and "buy in" to the changes as they unfolded. Possibly a third principle is worth noting as well, which was the establishment of deadlines for achieving various changes was developmental in nature and not arbitrarily established beforehand.

It should also be noted the following activities were identified consistently by the staff members interviewed. For purposes of clarity, the changes have been grouped into the

categories of school wide, curriculum, and policy changes.

School Wide Changes

	Problem	Change
1.	Aggressive playground behavior*	Established guidance services including two social workers and the Friendship Program
2.	Classroom interruptions*	Established new message system
3.	Oral language deficits	Developed oral language program (in progress)
4.	Inconsistent and overlapping use of math manipulatives	Developed math manipulatives guidelines (in progress)
5.	Lack of computer literacy	Established computer room
6.	Lack of space*	Relocated specialists and inclassroom tutoring (1985-86)
7.	Minimal library instruction*	Increased librarian position to full time
8.	No health & safety curriculum and inadequate teacher preparation time*	Developed health & safety curriculum and hiring of full time teacher which will permit grade level planning time (1985-86)

Curriculum Changes

9.	Lack of articulated and coordinated curricula in language arts, reading, writing, math, social studies, and science*	Developed curricula outlines, & guides, selected standardized texts in all identified areas (science and social studies pending)

Policy Changes

10.	Lack of consensus concerning mastery and student expectations*	Established policies clarifying mastery levels, promotion and retention
11.	Unclear and confusing reporting of pupil progress system*	Revised and simplified student record keeping system
12.	Lack of planned staff development program with minimal teacher involvement*	Created district wide inservice committee made up of teacher reps from each

	school and the superintendent
13. No homework policy*	Established homework policy and clarified parental involvement

(* denotes problems which were identified by the needs assessment process.)

General Question #2

What specific evidence or examples can be provided that demonstrate the impact of the needs assessment study and related subsequent activities upon any of the following?

2.1 Teaching methods

As part of the mastery level clarification process, curricula development, and inservice experiences; teachers reported applying several techniques in their classrooms. Examples of these were the use of mastery learning teaching methods and units derived from a course on mastery learning, more frequent monitoring of student progress, use of cooperative learning techniques, and standardized teaching of writing methods. The most frequently mentioned impact was the use of mastery learning teaching methods which were learned from a course offered in the district and in which all but two teachers from the Hardwick School participated. Direct classroom observations and a review of a mastery learning unit confirmed the use of related techniques.

2.2 Teaching Activities

Due to the revision of mastery level checkoff forms and reporting pupil progress forms, teachers are using the same set of learning objectives and procedures for recording student progress on a district wide basis. Planning time, particularly for teachers at the same grade level, will be impacted next year when the health and safety curriculum and instructor are functioning.

2.3 Curriculum Content and Emphasis

Comments to general question #1 illustrate the breadth of curriculum changes that have been implemented or are in progress. It was evident that these changes have been supported by the teachers and are being pursued at present. In addition, the inconsistencies between teachers in the allocation of instructional time to different subjects have been discussed and agreed upon time allotments are currently being supported by the teachers. For example, the teachers have agreed to offer 60 minutes of mathematics instruction daily whereas, before there was a range of 26 to 53 minutes of instruction offered daily.

2.4 Organizational Structure

Changes in this category include: expanded time for library services, the scheduling of health and safety instruction which will permit teachers to meet by their respective grade levels, and the arrangement of providing tutorial services within the classroom thus permitting greater coordination of instruction in the basic skills between the regular teacher and specialist.

2.5 Instructional Materials

Textbook selections in reading, language arts, and mathematics have resulted in teachers using a common set of texts that are coordinated between grades and schools in the district. The standardization of textbooks addressed the problem of high student turnover faced in the district and specifically at Hardwick Elementary School. Approximately 100 students or nearly one-third of Hardwick's school population changes over the course of the school year.

Although not directly attributable to the needs assessment process, a computer room with 18 computers has been established and the sixth grade teacher is released part time to direct and coordinate computer instruction at the Hardwick School.

2.6 Important Goals of Education

Item 16 of the Implementation Questionnaire yielded results that suggest the staff felt the most important goal, "that students have such basic skills as reading, writing and arithmetic", has been more than moderately impacted by the needs assessment process and the goal is being accomplished "very well." It is interesting to note that the basic skills goal stood out in this regard and other goals were somewhat further behind in terms of priority or accomplishment.

2.7 Serious Problems

The most serious problem facing the school at present is the lack of space. The kindergarten class is being held in a room which is below the State's minimum square footage requirements, storage space in limited, support specialists operate under crowded and shared space, and music, grades 1 and 2 are located in space other than in the main building. Unfortunately the needs assessment process has not solved this problem and to some degree the curricular changes have exacerbated the need for space.

2.8 School Policies

As can be noted in the comments for general question #1, a

number of new policies have been written and a system for filing these policies or important procedures has been developed. It is important to recognize that not only the addition of new policies has occurred but possibly more importantly, an attitude of the value of clarifying expectations for certain operations of the school has emerged as well.

General Question #3

Which of the following factors, either individually or collectively, played a major role in implementing any of the reported changes?

Fullan (1982) synthesized the past twelve years of educational research in United States and Canada concerned with educational change. In his chapter titled, "Causes/Processes of Implementation and Continuation", is presented a list of fifteen factors which are inferable from research and have been found to explain why some schools are successful in implementing desired changes. This follow-up study provided an opportunity to determine the relevancy of these fifteen factors to a rural school district which self initiated an improvement process.

The interview process followed was designed to ask each interviewee, without prompts, what factors they felt were most influential in bringing about the changes at their school. Following their responses, specific factors that they did not mention were suggested in order to confirm or not confirm their part in the change process. This approach ensured that the respondents could offer their initial impressions without being unduly influenced by specific prompts but on the other hand, there was an opportunity to check out specific factors.

Each of the factors are presented with appropriate comments to explain their relevance to this study. It should be noted that although each factor is listed separately, more often the case was that these factors were viewed as being interactive in nature and not mutually exclusive. The factors are clustered by the following categories: characteristics of the change, characteristics at the school district level, characteristics at the school level, and characteristics external to the local system.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHANGE

3.1 Need

There are at least two dimensions concerning need that were reflected in the interviews. First, many of the teachers felt that there was an outdatedness to texts and curriculum guides and that each school in the district was operating independently from one another. Also, Hardwick School had many false starts at

changes which ground to a halt because of principal turnover every two years (one principal did not return somewhat to everyone's surprise following a Christmas holiday break). Thus, when the search for a new superintendent and subsequently a new principal occurred, there was a concern for long term commitment and a need to focus on instruction and curricula. This view seemed widely shared by both the board of education and the teachers who participated in the search process of both administrators.

The need for specific changes was further clarified by the district's participation in a school improvement course offered onsite by the University of Vermont and a subsequent needs assessment study which was designed using the effective schools literature explored in the course. Through the courses teachers and administrators had an opportunity to explore the literature of school improvement and effective schools, and determine for themselves its relevance to potential school changes in Orleans Southwest School District(3). Out of the course experience came a clearer picture of areas of possible change and subsequently a contract was signed with CEPR to conduct a needs study in each of the five elementary schools. This decision had the backing of the superintendent and teachers, a large percentage of whom participated in the course.

The need or readiness to participate in a long range change effort emerged from an intuitive need for changes, frustration with past administrator turnover which led to many erratic and false starts, and the presence of a conceptual framework which was current in the literature and had relevance to local concerns. The results of the needs assessment study provided all staff members with specific information on how each school's staff perceived their respective school's performance vis-a-vis the effective schools characteristics. Subsequent planning efforts used this baseline of information for identifying short and long range priorities for the district and for each local school.

3.2 Clarity

This factor is a bit complex and possibly more long range in nature. In other words, the concern here is how accurately staff members perceive the value and potential payoff of the means and ends of the contemplated change process. There can be a sense of not knowing how all things fit together in regard to the change effort or how the changes fit into the larger picture such as the long range goals of the system. Or a false sense of clarity can

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3 See Buttram and Carlson (1983) for a treatment of the effective schools research literature and its relevance to rural schools.

exist in which it is assumed that people share the same understandings when in fact this is not the case. Each of these conditions can be present to one degree or another thus making it difficult to discern the prevailing condition at any one time.

Be that as it may, real or unreal; the staff members felt they knew generally where they were headed but not without some concerns about the bigger picture, how the various efforts linked together, and whether too much was being attempted at one time. This condition did prompt the superintendent of schools to write a memorandum in the fall of 1984 to all staff members of the district to explain how the various curricula and inservice projects fit within the district's philosophy and the effective schools research. This uncertainty has also prompted some clarification surrounding how future efforts will be judged appropriate for district or individual schools involvement. The criteria being discussed at present include each of the following: a relationship to the effective schools research be evident, the contemplated change be research based, the need for improvement and a "buying in" of teachers be on a voluntary basis, and a pilot testing, feedback, and evaluation process should be followed. For as Vermonters are often quoted as saying, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

3.3 Complexity

When queried about how understandable each of the proposed changes was, nearly to a person was reflected that they understood what was expected. It seems the planning process, the involvement of staff, use of graduate courses; provided ample opportunity to determine the substance of the proposed changes. The most frequently mentioned example of this was the application of mastery learning teaching methods. The teachers indicated that the mastery learning methodology was not something new but rather a way of repackaging standard and proven teaching methods. This was not stated by teachers to diminish the value of the methodology but rather it was seen as an opportunity to rethink and be more aware of their teaching methods. Many teachers felt they got many helpful suggestions. For example, several teachers felt that the course helped clarify their responsibilities to the range of individual pupil differences and the teachers began to apply the "ten percent rule." As one teacher explained it, "rather than spend 90% of my time on 10% of the students, I have reversed this by spending 90% of my time on most of the class and realize the 10% will have difficulty no matter what amount of time I give them."

It appears as Rosenblum and Louis (1979, p. 269) suggested that, "complex district-wide changes should be differentiated into an array of specific components." An examination of the problems and specific changes outlined in the responses reported

to general questions #1 and #2, reveals evidence that adequate segmentation occurred which permitted the teachers to comprehend the need and reasons for the contemplated changes. As Fullan (1982, p.59) states it, "...difficult changes are attempted because they have the potential to achieve greater benefits, but they must be done in a way which maximizes clarity (through defining specific components and implementing them incrementally)."

3.4 Quality and Practicality of Program

As suggested in the comments on complexity, teachers reported that the changes were understandable and easily transferred to classroom use. Again the mastery learning course and the course on cooperative learning both were viewed as having direct classroom relevance. Several teachers spoke of using related techniques with positive results. Since teachers have played a central role in the development of various instructional and curricular changes, they have been influential in ensuring that the process be as practical as possible. It was not an antitheoretical attitude being expressed but rather a sincere desire for being sure that a balance existed between the conceptual and practical. As one teacher described it,

> I attended the summer institute at the University of Vermont on social studies and science with 10 other teachers. We rode together in a van that was provided by the school district. At first the institute was not too productive but we were able to make it more so. I suggested that we have some time before 4:30 p.m. each afternoon for planning purposes among the teachers. We knew what our objective was and what needs were surrounding the teaching of social studies and science.

The teachers took an active role in ensuring that the various changes introduced in the district and at the Hardwick School met their "practicality test."

CHARACTERISTICS AT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT LEVEL

3.5 School District's History of Innovative Attempts

The Hardwick and Orleans Southwest School District historical experience runs a bit counter to the research reported by Fullan. Fullan's analysis would suggest that districts which have had poor experiences with previous change efforts would be less likely or certainly more leery of any future innovative attempts. In Hartwick, the teachers and board members recognized the need for changes but felt their history of poorly planned and implemented change efforts should not be repeated. Thus, in their recruitment of administrators they sought persons who expressed an interest in instruction and curricula develop-

ment, appeared to have competence in these areas, and extracted from them a commitment to be around long enough to properly shepherd the change process. It seems unsuccessful, as well as successful, past attempts at implementing changes can be potentially and equally instructive.

3.6 Adoption Process

This factor raises the question of whether the adoption process pursued by a school system was opportunistic in nature or did it grow out of a problem solving process. Also, an aspect of this factor includes the degree to which different personnel are involved in the various stages of the adoption and implementation process. In the Orleans Southwest District, the adoption process fit the ideal conditions suggested by a number of research studies. That is to say, the adoption process was initiated by persons in leadership positions (e.g.; school board members, superintendent, principals, and a subset of teachers) who felt changes were needed. A needs assessment study followed (initial stage of a problem solving process) which was conducted by an external party(4) and in cooperation with local staff. The decision to embark on a needs study was promoted by a task force of district personnel but received the endorsement of all staff members through individual building level meetings. Thus, teachers again played an important role in not only identifying the need to conduct a study but also agreed to participate by sharing perceptions of need, the establishment of priorities, and the development of implementation strategies. In the words of the superintendent of schools, "we familiarize the teachers with an outline of a process but it did not have to be followed to the letter. We also did not force teachers to adopt a new procedure without first buying in to it." In other words, an attitude prevailed that the process would move only as fast as teachers were able and willing to "buy in." Or, as another principal in the district stated it, "If I have to use power to achieve the goal, then I have lost."

3.7 District Administrative Support

The research speaks repeatedly to the importance of administrators participating directly in the various efforts associated with the change process. Certainly that was the case in the Orleans Southwest District and at the Hardwick Elementary

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4 It may be interesting to note that the district contemplated conducting its own needs assessment study but the school improvement course allowed them to see the value of an outside party conducting the study and in particular, the interviews of personnel. They felt staff would be more open and honest about their perceptions if the study was conducted through an outside party and the results would have more credibility.

School. Both the superintendent and principal were visible and an integral part of a variety of activities. They attended courses from beginning to end, inservice meetings and workshops, summer institutes at the University of Vermont, and served on the various curricula development committees. Their presence was deemed appropriate and desired by the teachers. The present district wide inservice committee is made up of teacher representatives from each of the schools and chaired by the superintendent. This committee makes the decisions for inservice workshops, courses, etc. and the administrators respect their authority in this area. Repeated comments were made at the district administrative staff meeting which reinforced this belief and practice.

3.8 Staff Development and Participation

There is little doubt that staff development played a major role in facilitating the changes in the district and at Hardwick School. Everyone recognized the importance of providing staff development opportunities in a variety of forms so that staff could become better informed and learn new concepts and skills under the careful guidance of persons with needed expertise. That is not to say there were not some failures or stress experienced with the variety of staff development efforts. The important thing in the minds of the teachers, administrators, and the school board was that staff development needed to be central to any effort to change.

Staff development took many forms for the district. There were graduate level courses taught in the district, for three successful summers a team of teachers and administrators travelled to the University of Vermont in a van provided by the school district, teachers have travelled to other school systems to observe practices that are being considered for change, inservice days which have provided the staff with exposure to persons with expertise related to areas under revision, and summer employment to work on curricular guides. In other words, there was a heavy commitment in this area and teachers played a central role in defining the scope of these efforts.

An example of district level and school board support was the willingness of the school board to reimburse a teacher for tuition for one graduate course per year. They have even liberalized the policy further by allowing teachers to be eligible for this benefit after one year of teaching in the district rather than waiting five years. In addition to tuition support, the board and principal have made liberal use of substitute teacher time and funds for providing teachers time to work on curricula, instructional units, to attend workshops, and for visiting other schools.

As one teacher summed it up, "We feel as thought we are

professionals and the board of education and administrators treat us that way."

3.9 Time Line and Information Systems (Evaluation)

One side of this characteristic is the time line being pursued in implementing change. There is considerable evidence in the literature of failed educational change being attributed often to trying to accomplish too much in too short of a period of time. The "buying in" approach in Orleans and at Hartwick Elementary School has provided a safeguard against the twin problems of overload or moving too swiftly. The superintendent and principal both have been very careful not to set an arbitrary deadline that would have created more problems than the change itself. Therefore, they have pursued a conservative course of taking sufficient time to ensure that the changes are "right" for everyone who is to be affected by the change and that people will have ownership of the final product or policy. This might pose cause for concern that teachers would engage in foot dragging in cases where they feel they do not wish to change. This does not seem to have occurred and the open manner in which business was done assured teachers that they would have plenty of opportunity to shape the process and its outcomes.

This latter observation speaks to the importance of communications about the projects and related changes among and between teachers and administrators. The teachers spoke very highly of the opportunity to work in committees with teachers from other schools and levels in the district. This provided a forum for them to exchange views and ideas and to reach a consensus on matters under review. In addition, the administrators have met as a district wide group and exchanged information on various change and inservice efforts. This is not to suggest that everyone holds the same view but more importantly the climate is safe for open and frank exchanges and there are several forums for these views to be shared.

3.10 Board and Community Characteristics

It is clear that the Hardwick Elementary School Board is in full support of the recent efforts at change in the school. What is less clear is how widely shared this support is in the community. The board president spoke highly of the current efforts that are being pursued by the school staff and is willing to provide available resources to further support the process. A portion of each school board meeting is devoted to a report by the principal at which time information is shared about related school activities. In addition, school board members and another parents have been invited to participate on the various curricula committees and visits to other schools such as Johnson City School District (which has a nationally recognized and exemplary program in mastery learning). As mentioned earlier,

the principal and superintendent have made several efforts at keeping parents informed by newsletters, articles in the local paper, school board reports, and presentations at special parent meetings.

As the superintendent expressed it, "We have not tried to keep our school boards or community members in the dark. Rather, just the opposite." In fact and somewhat to the surprise of the superintendent, the school board members of the various boards in Orleans Southwest School District, at a recent meeting with their state legislators, spoke very informatively about the various changes in which the respective schools were involved. Even though parents and school board members have not been directly involved in the implementation of various changes, they have had an opportunity to participate and have been kept informed. The system is sufficiently small enough and there is a stated open door policy that permits concerns or dissatisfactions to be detected early in order for appropriate responses to be explored. A special parent meeting held last spring was an example of this and seem to answer many of the questions of parents at the time.

SCHOOL LEVEL CHARACTERISTICS

3.11 Role of the Principal

There is unanimity of judgment that the principal has played an effective role in facilitating and leading the various change activities in the school and at the district level. He is respected, trusted, and seen as a person who can get a job done. He exudes a caring and supportive attitude to his teachers and students. There is little doubt that he has played a major role in creating a climate in the school and community in which the students are seen as the primary cause for the school's existence and that all efforts should be directed to providing them with an excellent educational experience. As he has stated it, "My goal for the school is to make this a better place for staff and children." His behavior and statements exemplify this philosophy.

As one teacher described him, "He has the ability to maintain a good balance between permitting the teachers to work things out and ensuring that things move forward." Or, as another teacher put it, "He allows for individual differences of his teachers and is able to unify the staff by identifying common threads. He is enthusiastic."

The principal views himself as being a facilitator and drawing upon the expertise of his staff to address the needs of the students. He feels that he has access to resources that can be manipulated in a variety of ways to enable teachers to accomplish their tasks. He openly suggests the use of aides and substitutes, and travel expenses to permit teachers time to work

on various curricula and instructional units or to explore areas of potential value to the school. He urges and feels that teachers are providing more of the leadership in recognizing needs and exploring alternative solutions. He is comfortable in being informed of progress with these efforts as one member of the staff and not necessarily being informed in advance of the school faculty. He seems comfortable and secure in his role as principal.

3.12 Teacher-teacher Relationships

As one person stated it, "It has gotten better." The "it" in this case is referring to teacher-teacher relations which in the more distant past had been sadly divided and nonsharing in nature. The implementation process of involving teachers on task forces, curricula committees, and in graduate level courses has forced and created opportunities for faculty exchanges. There is little doubt that these forums have provided opportunities to break down stereotypes and misconceptions of teachers in different schools or at different levels, e.g.; primary, intermediate, and secondary grade levels. Teachers spoke very positively of their contacts with other teachers and how they felt they have learned from one another. An indirect payoff of the change efforts has been a more professional atmosphere in which there is mutual respect and support among the teachers.

One teacher stated it this way, "Teacher-teacher relations are congenial and professional in nature, all seem to be unified in wanting to make education better at the school and are willing to share ideas, materials, etc."

3.13 Teacher Characteristics and Orientations

Characteristics of the teaching staff include such descriptive statistics as the following:

Item	Mean	Median	Range
1. Years of teaching experience:			
in Hardwick School	8.43	6	<1-35
overall	13.2	11.5	<1-38
2. Educational background	BS+15	BS+15	<BS-MS+30
3. Sex:			
Female - 18			
Male - 3			

As can be observed, the teachers at Hardwick Elementary School are an experienced staff of teachers, taken graduate level courses, and predominantly made up of females. Again, numbers do not reflect the attitudes or commitments of the teachers.

Classroom and faculty meeting observations revealed a hardworking and generally task oriented faculty. There is humor shared with each other and the students particulary in more informal settings but there is an overall and prevailing work ethic type of atmosphere. Teachers reflected in their comments during the interviews that they have a respect for each other's talents and skills and a willingness to share and support one another.

An example that may illustrate this support was an effort of two teachers at exploring and developing a coordinated approach to the use of math manipulatives in math instruction. These two teachers expressed some concern over the range of approaches being used by teachers and the confusion that this causes the students. The rest of the staff supported looking at the problem further and urged the two teachers to prepare a proposal of alternative solutions. These teachers have visited another school where such a program has been developed and will be reporting back to the faculty their suggestions. In other words, the climate is safe and supportive of teacher initiatives concerning perceived needs.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT CHARACTERISTICS

3.14 Government Agencies

Outside of the use of a specific consultant in writing at the State Department of Education, other agencies were not identified as providing assistance in the various changes. There were some earlier attempts to forge some type of interinstitutional relations with the State Department of Education and the University of Vermont, College of Education and Social Services. Only the relationship with the University has remained active and influential through out the district's change process. More on this in the comments on external assistance listed below.

3.15 External Assistance

Repeatedly teachers and administrators mentioned the value of their relationship with members of the College of Education and Social Services at the University of Vermont. Much of this was initiated by a summer institute on school improvement during the summer of 1982. At that time a relationship was explored that would ensure districts engaged in a school improvement process would receive appropriate support from the University. Specifically assistance was provided by offering graduate courses which where timed to fit with district needs and were offered in the district; planning, evaluation, and technical assistance in the conduct of the needs assessment study and follow-up planning; and summer institutes in the curricula areas under review at the local level.

In addition to the University assistance, other consultants

were mentioned. Also, more recently the Orleans Southwest District has become active in a network of schools from the northwest corner of Vermont and some neighboring school districts. This consortium of teachers, administrators, and board members has formed a common bond around a shared interest in master learning.

The district and the school have made use of external assistance but in a slightly different manner. By drawing upon the expertise available in graduate level courses along with the opportunity to interact with other staff members and participate in course projects, which directly linked with local school district needs, has sustained and guided the change process.

5.0 Summary of Study

As can be observed from the previous sections that considerable evidence is presented that demonstrates how a rural school district and in particular one of its elementary schools has been successful in bringing about a range of needed and desired changes. The study documents the specific activities pursued by members of the staff, the impact of these activities to present on instruction, curricula, and policy areas, and what factors influenced positively this effort. What is not fully revealed in the data thus far is the nature of the school and community climate, which in part is dued to the difficulty in finding words to amply describe it. Possibly the words of the president of the Hardwick Elementary School Board provides some help, "There exist a good rapport among teachers, board, and administration which allows for involvement and trust. A family type atmosphere exists here."

It was not within the scope of this study to trace historically how this trusting and caring climate emerged. However, it appears that there is pride and a sense of renewal in the school and community (a redevelopment project of the buildings and street lights, etc. in the downtown area of Hardwick is presently being pursued). In any regard, a positive state of mind does exist and it appears to be a climate in which ideas, changes, and personal value can and do flourish.

References

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Attachment A

Implementation Questionnaire

IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

DIRECTIONS:

This questionnaire is designed to determine the degree to which you feel the Needs Assessment project which your school and school district are engaged in has impacted various aspects of the school operation. For purposes of this study, the Needs Assessment (NA) program is defined as including not only the formal gathering of information by school district and outside persons (i.e., regional accreditation evaluation, effective schools assessment, school surveys, etc.) but also includes subsequent efforts at planning and implementing a range of activities over a period of several years aimed at changes is such areas as curriculum, instructional practices, school policies, etc.. Your candid perceptions are desired and needed to determine what changes, if any, have occurred in your school that can be mainly attributed to the Needs Assessment project.

All responses will be held in strictest confidence and no school or individual will be identified in the final summary of this study.

1. What is the name of the school in which you are currently employed?

_____

(name of school)

2. During the current school year, approximately what percent of your professional time is spent as a...

a. Teacher..... _____%
b. Administrator..... _____%
c. Other (please specify): _____.... _____%

Total professional time = 100%

3. Please circle those grade levels or ungraded levels that your <u>are currently teaching</u>. (If you are a teaching specialist or coordinator, please circle appropriate grade levels.) Then for each grade level which you are currently teaching, please write in the <u>number</u> of pupils you are teaching in each of these grades.

Grade:	Pre School	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
No. of Pupils	_____	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

Ungraded Level	Ungraded Elementary	Ungraded Middle or Jr. High	Ungraded High School
No. of Pupils	_____	_____	_____

4. For each subject area that you teach during the present school year, please answer the following questions:

   1) Approximately how many hours per week do you teach the subject? (If none, write "0")
   2) Has the teaching of that subject area during the current school year been affected by the Needs Assessment (NA) project in any of the following ways: curriculum content, instructional materials, teaching techniques, or in other ways? If "other", please specify. (To answer, please write the appropriate number in the boxes.)

Subject Area	Hours per week (if none, write "0")	Has NA affected the teaching of the subject in any of the following ways? (write appropriate numbers in boxes below) 3 = yes, greatly 2 = yes, partly 1 = no ? = don't know			
		Curriculum Content	Instructional Materials	Teaching Techniques	Other (please specify):
a. Reading....	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____
b. Lang.Arts/ English....	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____
c. Soc.St.....	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____
d. Math.....	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____
e. Science....	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____
f. Foreign Language...	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____
g. Ind. Arts..	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____
h. Agricultural Arts.....	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____
i. Home Economics..	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____
j. Fine Arts..	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____
k. Business or Commercial.	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____
l. Phy. Ed....	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____
m. Rem. Rdg...	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____
n. Athletic Coaching...	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____
o. Other (please specify): _____	_____hrs	( )	( )	( )	( ) _____

5. A teacher's working day consists of many instructional and non-instructional activities. Not every teacher carries out the same activities, nor does every teacher spend the same amount of time on these activities. The Needs Assessment (NA) project in your school may affect these different activities and the way in which you spend your time.

For each activity listed below, please answer these questions:

1) How many minutes, if any, do you spend in a typical day on each activity? (if none, write "0")
2) Is the activity affected by your school's participation in the Needs Assessment project?

Activity	Min. per day <u>you</u> spend on this activity (if none, write "0")	Is this school activity affected by your/school's participation in the NA project? (circle one)
a. Planning class assignments & projects	____min/day	greatly partly no ?
b. Locating & assembling instructional materials for class use	____min/day	greatly partly no ?
c. Correcting assignments & written work	____min/day	greatly partly no ?
d. Keeping records of pupil progress and grades	____min/day	greatly partly no ?
e. Holding pupil conferences	____min/day	greatly partly no ?
f. Handling discipline/behavior problems	____min/day	greatly partly no ?
g. Administering teacher-made or standardized tests	____min/day	greatly partly no ?
h. Guiding the class (as a whole) in discussions or assignments	____min/day	greatly partly no ?
i. Making up tests & exercises for class	____min/day	greatly partly no ?
j. Working with individual pupils on their learning problems	____min/day	greatly partly no ?
k. Instructing or working with small groups of pupils	____min/day	greatly partly no ?
l. Being available while pupils work independently	____min/day	greatly partly no ?
m. Doing diagnostic work on the learning difficulties of individual pupils	____min/day	greatly partly no ?

6. In your opinion, was it a good idea for this school district to participate in the Needs Assessment project?

(circle one)

It was a good idea.....1
It was not a good idea.....2
I have no opinion on this.....?

7. In your opinion, what has been the overall effect of the Needs Assessment project in your school?

(circle one)

Very positive effect.....5
Somewhat positive effect.....4
No effect.....3
Somewhat negative effect.....4
Very negative effect.....1

8. In your judgment, which of the following statements best reflects the cumulative impact of your district's NA project upon the content of education in the 1984-85 school year?

(circle one)

NA activities resulted in no change in the curriculum.....0
NA activities resulted in a shift in the emphasis placed upon various elements of the curriculum or the addition of a few new curriculum elements.....1
NA activities resulted in the addition of many new curricular elements.....2
NA activities resulted in the substitution of many new curricular elements for previous curricular elements.....3

9. In your judgment, which one of the following statements best reflects the cumulative impact of your district's NA project upon the structure and/or organization of this school?

(circle one)

NA activities resulted in no change in the organization of this school.....0
NA activities resulted in structural or organizational changes primarily at the classroom level; the organization of the school as a whole has not changed much.....1
NA activities have resulted in structural or organizational changes at the school level but there have been few changes at the classroom level.....2
NA activities have resulted in structural or organizational changes affecting the entire school including the classroom level.....4

10. Which of the following factors were involved in the NA project in your school district. For each factor checked "Yes", please indicate how the factor affected the implementation of the NA project.

Factor	Was this a feature of the NA project? No Yes (circle one)	What effect did this factor have on NA implementation? 5 = Strongly aided 4 = Moderately aided 3 = No effect 2 = Moderately impeded 1 = Strongly impeded (circle one)
a) the acquisition of new materials	2.....1	.....5....4....3....2....1
b) special training of new staff	2.....1	.....5....4....3....2....1
c) the addition to our staff of people with special skills	2.....1	.....5....4....3....2....1
d) the use of outside consultants	2.....1	.....5....4....3....2....1
e) participation of teachers in NA project planning	2.....1	.....5....4....3....2....1

11. How have the following additional factors affected the implementation of the NA project in your school district?

Factor	Effect on NA Implementation 5 = Strongly aided 4 = Moderately aided 3 = No effect 2 = Moderately impeded 1 = Strongly impeded
a) the level of support of teachers for the project	5....4....3....2....1
b) the level of support of the community for the project	5....4....3....2....1
c) level of support of pupils for the project	5....4....3....2....1
d) conflict in the school district prior to NA	5....4....3....2....1
e) conflict in the school district caused by NA	5....4....3....2....1
f) the level of staff training prior to participation in NA	5....4....3....2....1
g) the level of expertise in the school district for planning and implementation of a project such as NA	5....4....3....2....1
h) the turnover of professional staff	5....4....3....2....1

i)	the paperwork involved in the project	5....4....3....2....1
j)	the quality of communication between the school district administration and teachers	5....4....3....2....1

12. A variety of instructional materials are used by teachers to accomplish different instructional objectives. A) During a typical school week, how many hours does the typical pupil in your class use each of the following types of materials? B) How much has the use of these instructional materials been affected by your school's participation in the NA project?

Instructional Materials	Hours per week Materials used	Effect of NA 5 = Greatly increased 4 = Somewhat increased 3 = no change in use 2 = Somewhat decreased 1 = Greatly decreased (circle one)
a. Watching instructional television	_____ hrs/wk	5....4....3....2....1
b. Listening to tapes or records	_____ hrs/wk	5....4....3....2....1
c. Working with a programmed textbook	_____ hrs/wk	5....4....3....2....1
d. Working at a computer terminal	_____ hrs/wk	5....4....3....2....1
e. Watching films or filmstrips	_____ hrs/wk	5....4....3....2....1
f. Reading a convential book or textbk	_____ hrs/wk	5....4....3....2....1
g. Writing on printed workbooks or worksheets prepared by a commercial publisher	_____ hrs/wk	5....4....3....2....1
h. Writing on workbooks or worksheets prepared by this school system	_____ hrs/wk	5....4....3....2....1
i. Writing on workbooks or worksheets prepared by you or another teacher in this school	_____ hrs/wk	5....4....3....2....1

13. Teachers vary in the variety of instructional materials which they use in their classes at any particular time. On some occasions they use the same materials with all their pupils, while on other occasions they assign different materials to different pupils according to their abilities, interests, etc. For each of the following types of instructional situations, please indicate 1) How frequently the pupils in your classes are using different materials and 2) How the frequency of these instructional situations has been affected by your district's Needs Assessment (NA) project.

(Please write the appropriate number in the space provided.)

Instructional Situations When pupils in your class use the following materials, how frequently are some pupils using...	Frequency of Use 5 = Always 4 = Almost always 3 = Frequently 2 = Occasionally 1 = Almost never 0 = Never	Effect of NA Project 5= Greatly increased 4= Somewhat increased 3= No change 2= Somewhat decreased 1= Greatly decreased
a. Published <u>workbooks</u> that are different from what other pupils in your class are using	(____)	(____)
b. Teacher-prepared <u>worksheets</u> that are different from what other pupils in your class are using	(____)	(____)
c. Published <u>textbooks</u> that are different from what other pupils in your class are using	(____)	(____)
d. Teacher-prepared <u>tests</u> that are different from what other pupils in your class are using	(____)	(____)
e. Published <u>tapes</u> or <u>records</u> that are different from what other pupils are using	(____)	(____)

14. How often in your classes do you... (Circle one on each line.)

Activity	Never	Almost Never	Occasionally	Almost Always	Always
a. Have all pupils work from the same text or workbook	1	2	3	4	5
b. Have pupils work in small groups	1	2	3	4	5
c. Work alone with individual pupils	1	2	3	4	5
d. Use audio-visual materials	1	2	3	4	5
e. Permit pupils to leave class when they have finished their work	1	2	3	4	5
f. Let pupils move freely about the room during class	1	2	3	4	5
g. Let pupils select where they will sit	1	2	3	4	5
h. Let pupils hand in an assignment late without penalty	1	2	3	4	5

15. During the current year, how many of the following activities did you participate in? How many of these activities were a part of your school district's Needs Assessment (NA) project?

Activity	How many of these did you participate in?	How many of these were part of your NA project?
a. Formal committees in your school	_____ committees	_____ committees
b. Formal committees in the school district but not limited to your school	_____ committees	_____ committees
c. In-service training or workshops during the summer of 1984	_____ workshops	_____ workshops
d. Professional trips	_____ trips	_____ trips
e. Field trips with pupils	_____ trips	_____ trips
f. Meetings with parent groups	_____ meetings	_____ meetings
g. Meetings with pupil groups	_____ meetings	_____ meetings
h. Meetings with community groups	_____ meetings	_____ meetings

16. There are many possible goals of public school education. The following is not a list of all possible goals, but would you please rate each goal in terms of a) its <u>importance</u> as you see it, b) how well your school is accomplishing it; and c) the effect the Needs Assessment (NA) program had in the accomplishment of this goal. (Please write appropriate number in the space provided.)

Goals	How <u>important</u> is this goal? 3=Very import. 2=Mod. import. 1=Slighly important 0=Not import. ?=I don't know	How well is your school accomplishing this goal? 3=Very well 2=Mod. well 1=Slightly well 0=Not well at all ?=I don't know	What effects has the NA program had on the accomplishment of this goal? 5=Very positive effect 4=mod. positive effect 3=no effect 2=mod. negative effect 1=very negative effect ?=I don't know
a. That students have such basic skills as reading, writing and arithmetic	(____)	(____)	(____)
b. That students respect authority	(____)	(____)	(____)
c. That students have skills that will help them to get good jobs after they graduate from school	(____)	(____)	(____)
d. That students have the skills needed to succeed in college	(____)	(____)	(____)
e. That students live moral lives	(____)	(____)	(____)
f. That students be good citizens	(____)	(____)	(____)
g. That students relate well with people in a variety of jobs	(____)	(____)	(____)
h. That students get along well with people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds	(____)	(____)	(____)
i. That students develop an understanding and appreciation of the philosophy and thought of man	(____)	(____)	(____)
j. That stdnts think for themselves	(____)	(____)	(____)
k. That students get an education geared to their individual needs	(____)	(____)	(____)
l. That students can be what they choose to be in terms of career and lifestyle	(____)	(____)	(____)

17. Of the goals listed on the previous page (a-l), which one do you consider to be:

a. Most important: a b c d e f g h i j k l (Circle one)

b. Best accomplished by this school: a b c d e f g h i j k l (Circle one)

c. Goal most positively affected by NA program: a b c d e f g h i j k l (Circle one)

d. Goal most negatively affected by NA program: a b c d e f g h i j k l (Circle one)

18. In most schools there are a variety of problems which must be solved if the school is to do a better job. Listed below is a series of such problems. a) To what extent is each of these potential problems actually a problem in your school? b) To what degree has your Needs Assessment (NA) project helped solve this problem? (Please write appropriate number in the space.)

Potential Problem	3=This is a serious problem in my school 2=This is a moderate problem in my school 1=This is a minor problem in my school 0=This is not a problem in my school ?=I don't know	To what degree has the NA project help solve this problem? 5=greatly helped 4=moderately helped 3=no effect 2=modrtly impeded 1=greatly impeded
a. Our physical plant is inadequate	(____)	(____)
b. We do not have enough appropriate instructional materials and supplies	(____)	(____)
c. We have too many teachers who do not have the teaching skill needed by our pupils	(____)	(____)
d. We have too many teachers who do not have the motivation necessary to our pupils	(____)	(____)
e. We have too many pupils who do not have the academic ability necessary to succeed in school	(____)	(____)
f. We have too many pupils who do not have the motivation to succeed in school	(____)	(____)
g. We do not have enough information about instructional materials and techniques which might be better than the ones which we are currently using	(____)	(____)
h. We do not have enough information about how well we are achieving our educational goals	(____)	(____)

i. Too few of our graduates are able to succeed in whatever school or college they go to next	(____)	(____)
j. Too few of our graduates are able to succeed in whatever employment they undertake	(____)	(____)
k. Our school is too small to offer the type of educational program needed by our pupils	(____)	(____)
l. Our school is not organized in a way which uses available resources most effectively	(____)	(____)
m. Our school places too much emphasis upon the way things have been done in the past	(____)	(____)
n. We don't know enough about our community's true concerns and preferences regarding what our schools should be doing	(____)	(____)
o. We are not responsive enough to what the community tells us	(____)	(____)

19. During a typical school year, many decisions must be made. Not all people influence any particular decision, and the influence of different persons generally varies with the practices being decided upon. Please indicate, <u>in your opinion</u>, the degree of influence each of the persons listed below has on the following decisions.

0 = Usually has <u>no</u> influence
1 = Usually has <u>minor</u> influence
2 = Usually has <u>moderate</u> influence
3 = Usually has <u>decisive</u> influence
? = I don't know

(Please insert the appropriate code number in the appropriate space.)

Decisions	Persons: School Board Members	Superintendent	Principals	Teachers
a. Selected required texts & other materials	(____)	(____)	(____)	(____)
b. Establishing the objectives for ea course	(____)	(____)	(____)	(____)
c. Determining the concepts and information to be taught in a particular day	(____)	(____)	(____)	(____)
d. Determining daily lesson plans and activities	(____)	(____)	(____)	(____)
e. Adding or dropping courses	(____)	(____)	(____)	(____)
f. Hiring new teachers	(____)	(____)	(____)	(____)

g. Deciding to renew a teacher's contract	(____)	(____)	(____)	(____)
h. Making specific faculty assignments	(____)	(____)	(____)	(____)
i. Planning new buildings and facilities	(____)	(____)	(____)	(____)
j. Establishing salary schedules	(____)	(____)	(____)	(____)
k. Setting the time schedule and goals to be achieved for a system-wide change	(____)	(____)	(____)	(____)
l. Identifying the system-wide changes to be implemented	(____)	(____)	(____)	(____)
m. Working out details for system-wide changes	(____)	(____)	(____)	(____)

20. a) In your opinion, how much influence did each of the following persons or groups have in <u>implementing</u> the Needs Assessment project in your school district?
    b) How much influence <u>should</u> each have had?
    c) How much has the influence of this person or group in the decision-making process in your school changed because of NA?

Type of person or group	How much influence <u>did</u> each have? 4 = A great deal 3 = Some 2 = Very little 1 = Almost none 0 = None ? = I don't know	How much influence <u>should</u> each have had? 4 = A great deal 3 = Some 2 = Very little 1 = Almost none 0 = None ? = I don't know	How much did the influence of each change because of NA? 4 = Big increase 3 = Some increase 2 =None or little 1 = Some decrease 0 = Big decrease ? = I don't know
a. The school board	(____)	(____)	(____)
b. The superintendent	(____)	(____)	(____)
c. Central office staff other than the superintendent	(____)	(____)	(____)
d. Principals	(____)	(____)	(____)
e. Teachers	(____)	(____)	(____)
f. Teacher aides	(____)	(____)	(____)
g. Parents	(____)	(____)	(____)
h. Students	(____)	(____)	(____)
i. Community groups	(____)	(____)	(____)

j. Outside consultants	(____)	(____)	(____)
k. Others (please specify):_____	(____)	(____)	(____)

21. Listed below are a series of statements about activities which may or may not occur in your school. Please read each statement carefully and then indicate 1) whether that activity is characteristic of your school and 2) whether this event has been affected by your school's participation in the Needs Assessment program.

Activity	Activity is Characteristic of the School 3=Yes 2=Generally yes 1=Generally no 0=No	Effect of NA Program 3 = Occurs more because of NA 2 = Not affected by NA 1 = Occurs less because of NA
a. Teachers may arrange the desks in their classrooms however they like	(____)	(____)
b. Teachers may plan their instructional periods however they like	(____)	(____)
c. Teachers may make their own decisions about problems that come in their classrooms	(____)	(____)
d. Teachers may try out new ideas in their classes	(____)	(____)
e. Teachers may set their own standards for what grades are given for various levels of pupil performance	(____)	(____)
f. Teachers can plan and schedule their own field trips	(____)	(____)
g. Teachers may decide on the format for their lesson plans	(____)	(____)
h. Teachers can make their own selection of textbooks	(____)	(____)
i. Teachers may determine how best to achieve their course objectives	(____)	(____)
j. Teachers may exercise the final authority over major instructional decisions	(____)	(____)
k. Teachers feel free to call on other teachers for help to solve their problems	(____)	(____)
l. There is a general consensus among teachers about the way the school should be run	(____)	(____)
m. Experienced teachers accept new or younger teachers as colleagues	(____)	(____)

n. Teachers cooperate with each other to achieve common personal and professional goals	(____)	(____)
o. Teachers of various classes try to avoid creating problems for each other	(____)	(____)
p. Teachers feel free to call on administrators for help in solving problems	(____)	(____)
q. The people in this community respect their teachers and treat them as professionals	(____)	(____)
r. The people in this community appreciate the schools and what they are doing	(____)	(____)
s. The people in this community make the teachers feel as if they are a real part of the community	(____)	(____)
t. Special orientation sessions are held for new teachers	(____)	(____)
u. Special social gatherings are held to welcome new teachers	(____)	(____)
v. New teachers are given a handbook to acquaint them with the school	(____)	(____)
w. Experienced teachers are assigned to new teachers as "buddies" to help to acquaint them with the school and its procedures	(____)	(____)
x. Teachers are encouraged to meet with parents on a regular basis	(____)	(____)
y. Teachers are encouraged to participate in community groups in order to understand what the community wants from their schools	(____)	(____)
z. Teachers often work together on team teaching efforts in the classroom	(____)	(____)
aa. Teachers often participate in joint planning for educational activities	(____)	(____)

22. How many years (including this year) have you had teaching or administrative experience <u>in this school district</u> (full or part-time)?

Number of years of teaching experience: _____ years

Number of years of administrative experience: _____ years

23. What is the <u>total</u> number of years (including this year) that you have been a <u>teacher</u> (full-time or part-time)? Include counseling and special education.

Total number of years _____

24. What is the <u>total</u> number of years (including this year) that you have had <u>administrative</u> experience (full-time or part-time)?

Total number of years _____

25. What is the highest level of education which you have completed? (Circle one)

Less than a bachelor's degree.....1

Bachelor's degree.....2

Bachelor's degree plus 15 or more hours.....3

Master's degree.....4

Master's degree plus 30 or more hours.....5

Doctorate.....6

Other (specify)_____.....7

26. What is your sex? (Circle One)

Male.....1

Female.....2

27. When were your born? Year _____

Thank you for your assistance. Please mail this completed questionnaire in the enclosed postpaid envelope as soon as possible.

Attachment B

Site Visitation Protocol

SITE VISITATION PROTOCOL

Purposes:

Semistructured and structured interviews; nonparticipant observations of school personnel engaged in meetings, classroom instruction, and normal school activities; and a review of documents such as school reports, minutes of faculty meetings, and other related school records will provide the data base for exploring the following three general questions.

1. What were the key activities that the school engaged in since the gathering and reporting of the needs assessment data to the total school staff?

2. What specific evidence or examples can be provided that demonstrate the impact of the needs assessment study and related subsequent activities?

3. What factors influenced the needs assessment planning and implementation process and contributed to the impact reported by the staff in response to question 2?

Semistructured Interviews:

A smaller subset of faculty and chance encounters with other school staff will permit the exploration of the above set of general questions and will provide some basis for cross checking the responses garnered from structured interviews and information derived from observations and related documents.

Structured Interviews:

A larger sample of school staff personnel (50% or more) including the principal, classroom teachers, and support staff will participate in a structured interview to explore in depth the above three general questions. Selection of interviewees will depend on their role in related needs assessment activities and evident knowledge of the school's overall operation. Attachment A, Structured Interview Protocol, outlines the specific subquestions to be explored. The subquestions for ascertaining the factors which influenced the needs assessment to the greatest degree is derived from related school change literature. Particular acknowledgement should be given to Fullan's (1982) synthesis of twelve years of research which has produced evidence of the major factors influencing the implementation of school level change.

Nonparticipant Observations:

An attempt will be made to observe a cross section of school activities, meetings, classroom instruction etc. which should permit an opportunity to guage the overall school climate and to observe first hand the claims made by the staff of the needs assessment process and related results.

Document Review:

Related reports, minutes of meetings, memoranda and correspondence, curricular guides, newsletters, etc. will be sought for the purpose of examining and verifying the needs assessment process.

Time Schedule:

Approximately a week will be devoted to this information gathering process. The following schedule is only suggestive at this point and specific arrangements and school schedules will determine the actual flow of interviews and observations.

Day 1 - Conduct meeting with chief school officer (superintendent) and building principal to explain study intent and site visitation protocol.

Review with school principal the school schedule, establish procedures for contacting and interviewing school staff, request access to related documents, and request permission for observing classroom instruction and related events.

Conduct semistructured interview with chief school officer and structured interview with the school principal.

Receive a general tour of school facility and attendance area of school.

Day 2 - Initiate structured interviews and related observations.

Day 3 - Continue structured interviews and related observations.

Conduct semistructured interviews.

Day 4 - Continue semistructured and structured interviews and related observations.

Review related documents.

Day 5 - Wrap up interviews and observations.

Conduct brief debriefing sessions with principal and chief school officer.

Clarify with the administration subsequent research activities and their role in verifying major findings.

ATTACHMENT A

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Staff Member Name _____ Date _____
Position _____ School _____

General Question #1 - Please identify, in your judgment, the key activities that the _____ School engaged in since the gathering and reporting of the needs assessment data to the total school staff:

General Question #2 - What specific evidence or examples can you provide that would demonstrate the impact of the needs assessment study and related subsequent activities upon any of the following:

2.1 Teaching methods in the classroom?

2.2 Teaching activities, e.g.: planning, maintaining student records, parent-teacher conferences, discipline, grouping for instruction, etc.?

2.3 Curriculum content and/or curriculum emphases?

2.4 Organizational make up, structure and/or staffing arrangements of the school?

2.5 Increased use of instructional materials, e.g.: TV, computer, workbooks, texts, etc.?

2.6 Most important goals of education for the school, e.g.: teaching basic skills, respect for authority, meeting individual needs, etc.?

2.7 Serious problems facing the school, e.g.: space, poor student motivation, low teacher morale, strained relations with parents, etc.?

2.8 Policies of school, e.g.: homework, discipline, teacher evaluation, etc.?

General Question #3 - Which of the following factors, either individually or collectively, played a major role in implementing any of the above changes as reported in subquestions 2.1 - 2.8? Each interviewee will be asked to comment as to the degree to which each of the following factors played an important role.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHANGE

3.1 Need and/or readiness for change: (In other words, was there a sense on the part of the staff that changes were needed and the proposed changes were linked to identified needs in the school?)

3.2 Clarity: (How much clarity existed concerning the value of the proposed changes and the means for attaining their implementation?)

3.3 Complexity: (Was the complexity of the proposed changes sufficiently differentiated and reduced to workable components to be generally understood by school staff thus, permitting follow through without extensive confusion, frustration or disorder?)

3.4 Quality and the practicality: (Were the proposed changes such that they met the teachers' "practicality test" and they knew "how to" follow the new procedures?)

CHARACTERISTICS AT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT LEVEL

3.5 History: (Were previous change efforts generally positive, contributing to a willingness to again embark on new changes?)

3.6 Adoption process: (Was the process more opportunistic in nature or was it related to the needs assessment process which included of a general problem solving process and involved an important subset of staff?)

3.7 District administrative support: (Was there evident active superintendent involvement and support throughout the process?)

3.8 Staff development and participation: (Did staff development play a role in preparing and training staff to assume new behaviors? Did teachers play a significant role in the implementation of the proposed changes and have ample opportunity for discussions to plan appropriate modifications?)

3.9 Time line: (Was the time allocated for achieving the desired changes neither unrealistically short nor casually long but rather was the pace just right? Information: Was information on the progress of the proposed changes ample?)

3.10 Board and community: (Was there support and pressure for the proposed changes and was use made of individual parents?)

SCHOOL LEVEL CHARACTERISTICS

3.11 Principal: (Did the principal play an active and supportive role, help set a positive tone, and understood the proposed changes?)

3.12 Teacher - teacher relations: (Was there a sense of collegiality, open communications, trust, support and help, interaction, and positive morale among the teachers?)

3.13 Teacher characteristics and orientations: Was there a sense of teacher efficacy and a strong belief in being able to carry out the desired changes which would lead to improved learning opportunities for their students?)

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT CHARACTERISTICS

3.14 Government agencies: (Did the state department of education provide incentives and/or pressures to explore the proposed changes and provide staff development opportunities?)

3.15 External assistance: (Were there other organizations or individual consultants who were available and used at different stages of the implementation process?)